

**QUEENS CIVIC CONGRESS  
VIRTUAL GENERAL MEETING  
May 16, 2023**

**QCC Officers in attendance**

Henry Euler, Barbara Larkin, Charles Ober, Ashook Ramsaran, Warren Schreiber, Seymour Schwartz, Harbachan Singh, Jim Trent, Denise Winters, Elaine Young.

**Elected Officials & Representatives**

State Senator Toby Stavisky, Timothy Chubinidze for BP Donovan Richards, Ashley Liu for State Senator John Liu, Lois Marbach for Council Member Lee, Alie Ziraschi for City Council Member Paladino, Giovanna Reid, District Mgr. CB3Q.

**Civic Representatives**

Tommy Annelo, Debbi, Carin Bail, Ann Brown, Angela Castellano, Michael Feiner, Arlene Fleishman, Jackie Forrestal, Bob Friedrich, Carsten Glaeson, Johnny (KPCA), Kathi Kennedy, Johnny Kelly, Rhonda Kontner, Robert LoScalzo, Suzanne Peritz, Lilli Pische, President (BFHA), Sherry Reisner, William Scarborough, Bobby Sher, Anne Staheli, Brenda Tow, Ed Westley.

**Members of Coalition United for Equitable Urban Policy (CUEUP)**

Leif and Kathryn Arntzen, Metsy Mak, Debbie Farley, Leslie Clark, Micki McGee, Stuart Waldman.

**Meeting opened by President Schreiber at 7:35 p.m.**

**State Senator Toby Stavisky**

The Senator spoke of the unparalleled mass inundation of refugees from our southern border and she characterized it as a disaster. We simply do not know how many of them keep coming each day and NYC is running out of available space. She noted the federal government has maintained a deaf ear to our pleas for help. The State Senate has called upon Washington to declare a state of emergency to no avail. The state legislators do not want to overreact, but with the city having run out of space to deal with the many thousands of refugees, and frustrated by opposition to ideas for relieving the problem, they are proposing other locations than those currently being considered, however inappropriate.

Having passed the state budget for the coming fiscal year, the State Senate is working on a host of other issues. She does not see a step forward on affordable housing in the foreseeable future, and is adamantly opposed to the city's planned introduction of congestion pricing. The Senator concluded by responding to some comments and questions from those present.

### **Treasurer's Report by Jim Trent**

QCC has filed its IRA Form 990s for both the Congress and its Foundation.

Our current QCC bank balance is \$12,587.99. Three new civics have joined our ranks.

Paid memberships – 62 in 2021, 54 in 2022, 30 to date this year, and 2 prepaid for 2024.

Guest Speakers - Coalition United for Equitable Urban Policy Responding to the devastating Covid pandemic, the City had introduced an outdoor dining program designed to be temporary. It has allowed for outdoor dining structures to exist in roadways.

While the CUEUP was not initially opposed to the program, its outgrowth all over the city has resulted in intolerable and uncontrollable conditions seriously effecting quality of life for local communities: eyesores, abandoned sheds, vermin, excessive late hour noise and activity at all hours, impassible sidewalks and street traffic, and building fires.

Dominated by the restaurant industry, the program's negative impact continues to go unnoticed by the electeds, the City Council and the media, while nothing is being done to control and correct the excesses without manpower for enforcement. Public engagement is non-existent. In response, CUEUP has developed a common blueprint to allow for outdoor dining where appropriate with a focus on Community Board review of licenses.

The presenters then reported the severe impacts in their communities resulting from the current program, followed by the floor being open to comments and questions. Responding to their request for the support of QCC, President Schreiber said the issue will be considered by QCC's executive committee.

(Note: On May 18th, it was announced that a City Council bill had been introduced that would allow for dining structures to exist in roadways and for sidewalk cafes to be allowed. They would become a permanent part of the City's landscape. The measure requires the approval of the full City Council.)

### **Elaine Young follow-up on Mayflower Hotel**

The community's battle against the former hotel at Horace Harding Expwy. and 186th Street which had been converted into a homeless shelter continues to drag on. In the attempt to placate the community opposition a Zoom meeting organized by the involved city agency had taken place a week ago. Elaine noted that the meeting organizers had taken over the meeting and community members who wanted to voice their opposition were not allowed to speak.

A three-year contract had recently been signed for a permanent shelter at this location. The conversion to shelter homeless persons and the formerly incarcerated brought with it a high level of crime that has imposed many response times from the Fire and Police departments. Throughout this long period the community was never given the opportunity to express their view. At this point Elaine does not see a way to stop the program. She urged the support of QCC and in response President Schreiber said he will craft an appropriate

letter of support to the Governor and other involved electeds.

**QCC Nominating Committee formed**

President Schreiber announced the formation of a nominating committee. The members are Ashook Ramsaran, Chair; John McCarthy; Denise Winters and Ed Westley. Their recommendations will be reported at our June meeting for a vote.

With no further business, the meeting was concluded at 9:20 p.m.

Prepared by Seymour Schwartz

May 22, 2023

Next meeting: June 22, 2023